

ST. PAUL, MINN.
PIONEER PRESS

H. 99,249
S. 301,347

JAN 25 1966

Editorials

McCarthy's CIA Proposal

If the Central Intelligence Agency is engaged in all of the activities around the world with which it is credited by some Americans, then Congress probably should have a better check on its operations.

The trouble is that few people, including congressmen, know precisely what the CIA mission is. It conducts espionage and collects information vital to national security, of course. But what else does it do? Does it, as some say, actively work to overthrow governments? Does it not only carry out American foreign policy but also create it or guide it?

Minnesota's Sen. Eugene McCarthy argues that lawmakers do not really know the answers to those questions because for all 20 years of CIA's existence "there has been no formal review of its activities by members of Congress." He wants the Senate foreign relations committee to make a "full and complete study" of the CIA and the effects of its operations and activities upon the foreign relations of the U. S.

"Since there has been no formal review," he said, "it has not been possible to determine whether a valid basis exists for criticism of the agency, or to prevent what appears to be distortions of

policy or to dispel rumors surrounding activities of the CIA."

Previous attempts to establish a congressional committee to be a CIA "watchdog" have failed, the last time in 1956. As an arm of the executive branch, the CIA is under direct control of the President and the White House has always rejected attempts of the legislature to "oversee" the agency's activities except through the appropriations and armed services subcommittees in both houses of Congress.

Congressmen who sit on those subcommittees contend that such surveillance is adequate. They have been supported by a majority of their colleagues in the past. Some fear, and rightly so, that bringing more congressmen into the picture could jeopardize the highly sensitive organization's work.

It has been 10 years since lawmakers last examined the problem. Then the Senate turned down creation of a joint committee on the CIA by a 2 to 1 majority. In view of the uncertainty about some of the CIA's operations in the last decade, however it's time for congressmen to take another look at how adequate their surveillance of the CIA is today.